

CHAPTER 12 GENERAL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

[Prior to 9/7/88, see Public Instruction Department[670] Ch 4]

PREAMBLE

The goal for the early childhood through twelfth grade educational system in Iowa is to improve the learning, achievement, and performance of all students so they become successful members of a community and workforce. It is expected that each school and school district shall continue to improve its educational system so that more students will increase their learning, achievement, and performance.

Accreditation focuses on an ongoing school improvement process for schools and school districts. However, general accreditation standards are the minimum requirements that must be met by an Iowa public school district to be accredited. A public school district that does not maintain accreditation shall be merged, by the state board of education, with one or more contiguous school districts as required by Iowa Code subsection 256.11(12). A nonpublic school must meet the general accreditation standards if it wishes to be designated as accredited for operation in Iowa.

General accreditation standards are intended to fulfill the state's responsibility for making available an appropriate educational program that has high expectations for all students in Iowa. The accreditation standards ensure that each child has access to an educational program that meets the needs and abilities of the child regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, marital status, geographic location, or socioeconomic background.

With local community input, school districts and accredited nonpublic schools shall incorporate accountability for student achievement into comprehensive school improvement plans designed to increase the learning, achievement, and performance of all students. As applicable, and to the extent possible, comprehensive school improvement plans shall consolidate federal and state program goal setting, planning, and reporting requirements. Provisions for multicultural and gender fair education, technology integration, global education, gifted and talented students, at-risk students, students with disabilities, and the professional development of all staff shall be incorporated, as applicable, into the comprehensive school improvement plan. See subrules 12.5(8) to 12.5(13), 12.7(1), and 12.8(1).

DIVISION I GENERAL STANDARDS

281—12.1(256) General standards.

12.1(1) *Schools and school districts governed by general accreditation standards.* These standards govern the accreditation of all prekindergarten, if offered, or kindergarten through grade 12 school districts operated by public school corporations and the accreditation, if requested, of prekindergarten or kindergarten through grade 12 schools operated under nonpublic auspices. Each school district shall take affirmative steps to integrate students in attendance centers and courses. Schools and school districts shall collect and annually review district, attendance center, and course enrollment data on the basis of race, national origin, gender, and disability. Equal opportunity in programs shall be provided to all students regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, or creed. Nothing in this rule shall be construed as prohibiting any bona fide religious institution from imposing qualifications based upon religion when such qualifications are related to a bona fide religious purpose.

12.1(2) *School board.* Each school or school district shall be governed by an identifiable authority which shall exercise the functions necessary for the effective operation of the school and referred to in these rules as the "board."

12.1(3) *Application for accreditation.* The board of any school or school district that is not accredited on the effective date of these standards and which seeks accreditation shall file an application with the director, department of education, on or before the first day of January of the school year preceding the school year for which accreditation is sought.

12.1(4) *Accredited schools and school districts.* Each school or school district receiving accreditation under the provisions of these standards shall remain accredited except when by action of the state board of education it is removed from the list of accredited schools maintained by the department of education in accordance with Iowa Code subsections 256.11(11) and 256.11(12).

12.1(5) *When nonaccredited.* A school district shall be nonaccredited on the day after the date it is removed from the list of accredited schools by action of the state board of education. A nonpublic school shall be nonaccredited on the date established by the resolution of the state board, which shall be no later than the end of the school year in which the nonpublic school is declared to be nonaccredited.

12.1(6) *Alternative provisions for accreditation.* School districts may meet accreditation requirements through the provisions of Iowa Code sections 256.13, nonresident students; 273.7A, services to school districts; 279.20, superintendent—term; 280.15, joint employment and sharing; 282.7, attending in another corporation—payment; and 282.10, whole grade sharing. Nonpublic schools may meet accreditation requirements through the provisions of Iowa Code section 256.12.

12.1(7) *Minimum school calendar and day of instruction.* Each board shall adopt a school calendar that identifies specific days for student instruction, staff development and in-service time, and time for parent-teacher conferences. The length of the school calendar does not dictate the length of contract or days of employment for instructional and noninstructional staff. The school calendar may be operated anytime during the school year of July 1 to June 30 as defined by Iowa Code section 279.10. A minimum of 180 days of the school calendar, for school districts beginning no sooner than a day during the calendar week in which the first day of September falls, shall be used for student instruction. However, if the first day of September falls on a Sunday, school may begin any day during the calendar week preceding September 1. These 180 days shall meet the requirements of “day of school” in subrule 12.1(8), “minimum school day” in subrule 12.1(9), and “day of attendance” in subrule 12.1(10). (Exception: A school or school district may, by board policy, excuse graduating seniors up to five days of instruction after school or school district requirements for graduation have been met.) If additional days are added to the regular school calendar because of inclement weather, a graduating senior who has met the school district’s requirements for graduation may be excused from attendance during the extended school calendar. A school or school district may begin its school calendar earlier for other educational purposes involving instructional and noninstructional staff.

12.1(8) *Day of school.* A day of school is a day during which the school or school district is in session and students are under the guidance and instruction of the instructional professional staff. School shall be considered in session during parent-teacher conferences as well as during activities such as field trips if students are engaged in programs or activities under the guidance and direction of the instructional professional staff. All grade levels of the school or school district must be operated and available for attendance by all students. An exception is if either the elementary or secondary grades are closed and provided that this time missed is made up at some other point during the school calendar so as to meet the minimum of 180 days of instruction for all grades 1 through 12. If a classroom or attendance center is closed for emergency health or safety reasons but the remainder of the school or school district is in operation, the day may be counted as a day of school.

12.1(9) *Minimum school day.* A school day shall consist of a minimum of 5½ hours of instructional time for all grades 1 through 12. The minimum hours shall be exclusive of the lunch period. Passing time between classes as well as time spent on parent-teacher conferences may be counted as part of the 5½-hour requirement. The school or school district may record a day of school with less than the minimum instructional hours if emergency health or safety factors require the late arrival or early dismissal of students on a specific day; or if the total hours of instructional time for all grades 1 through 12 in any five consecutive school days equal a minimum of 27½ hours, even though any one day of school is less than the minimum instructional hours because staff development is provided for the instructional professional staff or because parent-teacher conferences have been scheduled beyond the regular school day.

Furthermore, if the total hours of instructional time for the first four consecutive days equal at least 27½ hours because parent-teacher conferences are held beyond the regular school day, a school or school district may record zero hours of instructional time on the fifth consecutive school day as a minimum school day.

12.1(10) *Day of attendance.* A day of attendance shall be a day during which students were present and under the guidance and instruction of the instructional professional staff. When staff development designated by the board occurs outside of the time required for a “minimum school day,” students shall be counted in attendance. (Note exceptions in subrules 12.1(8) and 12.1(9).)

12.1(11) *Kindergarten.* The number of instructional days within the school calendar and the length of the school day for kindergarten shall be defined by the board. This subrule applies to an accredited nonpublic school only if it offers kindergarten.

DIVISION II
DEFINITIONS

281—12.2(256) Definitions. For purposes of these rules, the following definitions shall apply:

“*Alternative options education programs*” means alternative programs or schools as identified in Iowa Code section 280.19A.

“*Alternative program*” means a class or environment established within the regular educational program and designed to accommodate specific student educational needs such as, but not limited to, work-related training; reading, mathematics or science skills; communication skills; social skills; physical skills; employability skills; study skills; or life skills.

“*Alternative school*” means an environment established apart from the regular educational program and that includes policies and rules, staff, and resources designed to accommodate student needs and to provide a comprehensive education consistent with the student learning goals and content standards established by the school district or by the school districts participating in a consortium. Students attend by choice.

“*Annual improvement goals*” means the desired one-year rate of improvement for students. Data from multiple measures may be used to determine the rate of improvement.

“*At-risk student*” means any identified student who needs additional support and who is not meeting or not expected to meet the established goals of the educational program (academic, personal/social, career/vocational). At-risk students, other than students with disabilities, include but are not limited to students in the following groups: homeless children and youth, dropouts, returning dropouts, and potential dropouts.

“*Baseline data*” means information gathered at a selected point in time and used thereafter as a basis from which to monitor change.

“*Benchmarks*” means specific knowledge and skills anchored to content standards that a student needs to accomplish by a specific grade or grade span.

“*Board*” means the board of directors in charge of a public school district or the authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school.

“*Comprehensive school improvement plan*” means a design that shall describe how the school or school district will increase student learning, achievement, and performance. This ongoing improvement design may address more than student learning, achievement, and performance.

“*Content standards*” means broad statements about what students are expected to know and be able to do.

“*Curriculum*” means a plan that outlines what students shall be taught. Curriculum refers to all the courses offered, or all the courses offered in a particular area of study.

“*Department*” means the department of education.

“*Districtwide*” means all attendance centers within a school district or accredited nonpublic school.

“Districtwide assessments” means large-scale achievement or performance measures. At least one districtwide assessment shall allow for the following: the comparison of the same group of students over time as they progress through the grades or the cross-sectional comparison of students at the same grades over multiple years.

“Districtwide progress” means the quantifiable change in school or school district student achievement and performance.

“Dropout” means a school-age student who is served by a public school district and enrolled in any of grades seven through twelve and who does not attend school or withdraws from school for a reason other than death or transfer to another approved school or school district or has been expelled with no option to return.

“Educational program.” The educational program adopted by the board is the entire offering of the school, including out-of-class activities and the sequence of curriculum areas and activities. The educational program shall provide articulated, developmental learning experiences from the date of student entrance until high school graduation.

“Enrolled student” means a person that has officially registered with the school or school district and is taking part in the educational program.

“Incorporate” means integrating career education, multicultural and gender fair education, technology education, global education, higher-order thinking skills, learning skills, and communication skills into the total educational program.

“Indicators” provide information about the general status, quality, or performance of an educational system.

“Long-range goals” means desired targets to be reached over an extended period of time.

“Multiple assessment measures,” for reporting to the local community or the state, means more than one valid and reliable instrument that quantifies districtwide student learning, including specific grade-level data.

“Performance levels.” The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires that at least three levels of performance be established to assist in determining which students have or have not achieved a satisfactory or proficient level of performance. At least two of those three levels shall describe what all students ought to know or be able to do if their achievement or performance is deemed proficient or advanced. The third level shall describe students who are not yet performing at the proficient level. A school or school district may establish more than three performance levels that include all students for districtwide or other assessments.

“Potential dropouts” means resident pupils who are enrolled in a public or nonpublic school who demonstrate poor school adjustment as indicated by two or more of the following:

1. High rate of absenteeism, truancy, or frequent tardiness.
2. Limited or no extracurricular participation or lack of identification with school including, but not limited to, expressed feelings of not belonging.
3. Poor grades including, but not limited to, failing in one or more school subjects or grade levels.
4. Low achievement scores in reading or mathematics which reflect achievement at two years or more below grade level.

“Proficient,” as it relates to content standards, characterizes student performance at a level that is acceptable by the school or school district.

“Returning dropouts” means resident pupils who have been enrolled in a public or nonpublic school in any of grades seven through twelve who withdrew from school for a reason other than transfer to another school or school district and who subsequently enrolled in a public school in the district.

“School” means an accredited nonpublic school.

“School district” means a public school district.

“School improvement advisory committee” means a committee, as defined in Iowa Code section 280.12, that is appointed by the board. Committee membership shall include students, parents, teachers, administrators, and representatives from the local community which may include business, industry, labor, community agencies, higher education, or other community constituents. To the extent possible, committee membership shall have balanced representation of the following: race, gender, national origin, and disability. The school improvement advisory committee as defined by Iowa Code section 280.12 and the board are also part of, but not inclusive of, the local community.

“Student learning goals” means general statements of expectations for all graduates.

“Students with disabilities” means students who have individualized education programs regardless of the disability.

“Subgroups” means a subset of the student population that has a common characteristic. Subgroups include, but are not limited to, gender, race, students with disabilities, and socioeconomic status.

“Successful employment in Iowa” may be determined by, but is not limited to, reviewing student achievement and performance based on locally identified indicators such as earnings, educational attainment, reduced unemployment, and the attainment of employability skills.

DIVISION III
ADMINISTRATION

281—12.3(256) Administration. The following standards shall apply to the administration of accredited schools and school districts.

12.3(1) Board records. Each board shall adopt by written policy a system for maintaining accurate records. The system shall provide for recording and maintaining the minutes of all board meetings, coding all receipts and expenditures, and recording and filing all reports required by the Iowa Code or requested by the director of the department of education. Financial records of school districts shall be maintained in a manner as to be easily audited according to accepted accounting procedures.

12.3(2) Policy manual. The board shall develop and maintain a policy manual which provides a codification of its policies, including the adoption date, the review date, and any revision date for each policy. Policies shall be reviewed at least every five years to ensure relevance to current practices and compliance with the Iowa Code, administrative rules and decisions, and court decisions.

12.3(3) Personnel evaluation. Each board shall adopt evaluation criteria and procedures for all contracted staff. The evaluation processes shall conform to Iowa Code sections 272.33, 279.14, and 279.23A.

12.3(4) *Student records.* Each board shall require its administrative staff to establish and maintain a system of student records. This system shall include for each student a permanent office record and a cumulative record.

The permanent office record shall serve as a historical record of official information concerning the student's education. At a minimum, the permanent office record should contain evidence of attendance and educational progress, serve as an official transcript, contain other data for use in planning to meet student needs, and provide data for official school and school district reports. This record is to be permanently maintained and stored in a fire-resistant safe or vault or can be maintained and stored electronically with a secure back-up file.

The cumulative record shall provide a continuous and current record of significant information on progress and growth. It should reflect information such as courses taken, scholastic progress, school attendance, physical and health record, experiences, interests, aptitudes, attitudes, abilities, honors, extra-curricular activities, part-time employment, and future plans. It is the "working record" used by the instructional professional staff in understanding the student. At the request of a receiving school or school district, a copy of the cumulative record shall be sent to officials of that school when a student transfers.

For the sole purpose of implementing an interagency agreement with state and local agencies in accordance with Iowa Code section 280.25, a student's permanent record may include information contained in the cumulative record as defined above.

The board shall adopt a policy concerning the accessibility and confidentiality of student records that complies with the provisions of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and Iowa Code chapter 22.

12.3(5) *Requirements for graduation.* Each board providing a program through grade 12 shall adopt a policy establishing the requirements students must meet for high school graduation. This policy shall make provision for early graduation and shall be consistent with these requirements and Iowa Code section 280.14.

12.3(6) *Student responsibility and discipline.* The board shall adopt student responsibility and discipline policies as required by Iowa Code section 279.8. The board shall involve parents, students, instructional and noninstructional professional staff, and community members in the development and revision of those policies where practicable or unless specific policy is mandated by legislation. The policies shall relate to the educational purposes of the school or school district. The policies shall include, but are not limited to, the following: attendance; use of tobacco; the use or possession of alcoholic beverages or any controlled substance; harassment of or by students and staff; violent, destructive, and seriously disruptive behavior; suspension, expulsion, emergency removal, weapons, and physical restraint; out-of-school behavior; participation in extracurricular activities; academic progress; and citizenship.

The policies shall ensure due process rights for students and parents, including consideration for students who have been identified as requiring special education programs and services.

The board shall also consider the potential, disparate impact of the policies on students because of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, or socioeconomic background.

The board shall publicize its support of these policies; its support of the staff in enforcing them; and the staff's accountability for implementing them.

12.3(7) *Health services.* The board shall adopt a policy for the implementation of a school health services program consistent with the provisions of 281—41.96(256B).

12.3(8) *Audit of school funds.* This subrule applies to school districts. The results of the annual audit of all school district funds conducted by the state auditor or a private auditing firm shall be made part of the official records of the board as described in Iowa Code section 11.6.

12.3(9) *School or school district building grade-level organization.* The board shall adopt a grade-level organization for the buildings under its jurisdiction as described in Iowa Code section 279.39.

12.3(10) *Report on accredited nonpublic school students.* Between September 1 and October 1 of each year, the board secretary of each school district shall secure from each accredited nonpublic school located within its boundaries information about enrolled students as required by Iowa Code section 299.3. Each accredited nonpublic school shall submit the required information in duplicate. The board secretary of each school district shall send one copy to the board secretary of the area education agency within which the school district is located.

Within ten days of receipt of notice, each accredited nonpublic school shall send a report to the board secretary of the school district within which the accredited nonpublic school is located. This report shall conform to the requirements of Iowa Code section 299.3.

12.3(11) *Policy required relating to health services, media services programs and guidance programs.* The board of directors of each school district and the authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school shall adopt a local policy relating to health services, media services programs and guidance programs. The policy shall state whether or not the services shall be provided. This subrule shall not be interpreted to require schools and school districts to provide or to offer health services, media services or guidance programs.

DIVISION IV
SCHOOL PERSONNEL

281—12.4(256) School personnel. License/certificate and endorsement standards required in this rule relate to licenses/certificates and endorsements issued by the state board of educational examiners. The following standards shall apply to personnel employed in accredited schools.

12.4(1) *Instructional professional staff.* Each person who holds a license/certificate endorsed for the service for which that person is employed shall be eligible for classification as a member of the instructional professional staff.

12.4(2) *Noninstructional professional staff.* A person who holds a statement of professional recognition, including but not limited to a physician, dentist, nurse, speech therapist, or a person in one of the other noninstructional professional areas designated by the state board of education, shall be eligible for classification as a member of the noninstructional professional staff.

12.4(3) *Basis for approval of professional staff.* Each member of the professional staff shall be classified as either instructional or noninstructional. An instructional professional staff member shall be regarded as approved when holding either an appropriate license/certificate with endorsement or endorsements, or a license/certificate with an endorsement statement, indicating the specific teaching assignments that may be given. A noninstructional professional staff member shall be regarded as approved when holding a statement of professional recognition for the specific type of noninstructional professional school service for which employed.

12.4(4) *Required administrative personnel.* Each board that operates both an elementary school and a secondary school shall employ as its executive officer and chief administrator a person who holds a license/certificate endorsed for service as a superintendent. The board of a school district may meet this requirement by contracting with its area education agency for “superintendency services” as provided by Iowa Code section 273.7A. The individual employed or contracted for as superintendent may serve as elementary principal in that school or school district provided that the superintendent holds the proper licensure/certification but cannot also serve as a high school principal in that school or school district. For purposes of this subrule, high school means a school which commences with either grade 9 or grade 10, as determined by the board of directors of the school district, or by the governing authority of the nonpublic school in the case of nonpublic schools. Boards of school districts may jointly employ a superintendent, provided such arrangements comply with the provisions of Iowa Code subsection 279.23(4).

12.4(5) *Staffing policies—elementary schools.* The board operating an elementary school shall develop and adopt staffing policies designed to attract, retain, and effectively utilize competent personnel. Each board operating an elementary school shall employ at least one elementary principal. This position may be combined with that of secondary principal or with a teaching assignment at the elementary or secondary level, provided the individual holds the proper licenses/certificates and endorsements.

When grades seven and eight are part of an organized and administered junior high school, the staffing policies adopted by the board for secondary schools shall apply. When grades seven and eight are part of an organized and administered middle school, the staffing policies adopted by the board for elementary schools shall apply.

12.4(6) Staffing policies—secondary schools. The board operating a secondary school shall develop and adopt staffing policies designed to attract, retain, and effectively utilize competent personnel. Each board operating a secondary school shall employ at least one secondary principal. This position may be combined with that of elementary principal or with a teaching assignment at the elementary or secondary level, provided the individual holds the proper licenses/certificates and endorsements. This position cannot be combined with that of superintendent.

12.4(7) Principal. “Principal” means a licensed/certificated member of a school’s instructional staff who serves as an instructional leader, coordinates the process and substance of educational and instructional programs, coordinates the budget of the school, provides formative evaluation for all practitioners and other persons in the school, recommends or has effective authority to appoint, assign, promote, or transfer personnel in a school building, implements the local school board’s policy in a manner consistent with professional practice and ethics, and assists in the development and supervision of a school’s student activities program.

12.4(8) Teacher. A teacher shall be defined as a member of the instructional professional staff who holds a license/certificate endorsed for the type of position in which employed. A teacher diagnoses, prescribes, evaluates, and directs student learnings in terms of the school’s objectives, either singly or in concert with other professional staff members; shares responsibility with the total professional staff for developing educational procedures and student activities to be used in achieving the school’s objectives; supervises educational aides who assist in serving students for whom the teacher is responsible; and evaluates or assesses student progress during and following instruction in terms of the objectives sought, and uses this information to develop further educational procedures.

12.4(9) Educational assistant. An educational assistant shall be defined as an employee who, in the presence or absence of an instructional professional staff member but under the direction, supervision, and control of the instructional professional staff, supervises students or assists in providing instructional and other direct educational services to students and their families. An educational assistant shall not substitute for or replace the functions and duties of a teacher as established in subrule 12.4(8).

During the initial year of employment, an educational assistant shall complete staff development approved by the board as provided in subrule 12.7(1).

12.4(10) Record of license/certificate or statement of professional recognition. The board shall require each administrator, teacher, support service staff member, and noninstructional professional staff member on its staff to supply evidence that each holds a license/certificate or statement of professional recognition which is in force and valid for the type of position in which employed.

12.4(11) Record required regarding teacher and administrative assignments. The board shall require its superintendent or other designated administrator to maintain a file for all regularly employed members of the instructional professional staff, including substitute teachers. The file shall consist of complete official transcripts of the preparation of these staff members and their legal licenses/certificates or copies thereof showing that they are eligible for the position in which employed. The official shall also maintain on file a legal license/certificate or statement of professional recognition as defined in subrule 12.4(2) for each member of the noninstructional professional staff. These records shall be on file at the beginning of and throughout each school year and shall be updated annually to reflect all professional growth.

On December 1 of each year, the official shall verify to the department of education the licensure/certification and endorsement status of each member of the instructional and administrative staff. This report shall be on forms provided by the department of education and shall identify all persons holding conditional authorizations and their specific assignment(s) with the conditional authorization(s).

12.4(12) Nurses. Each board that employs a nurse shall require a current license to be filed with the superintendent or other designated administrator as specified in subrule 12.4(10).

12.4(13) Prekindergarten staff. Prekindergarten teachers shall hold a license/certificate valid for the prekindergarten level. The board shall employ personnel as necessary to provide effective supervision and instruction in the prekindergarten program.

12.4(14) Physical examination. Except as otherwise provided in 281—43.15(285), the local board shall require each employee to file with it certification of fitness to perform the tasks assigned which shall be in the form of a written report of a physical examination, including a check for tuberculosis, by a licensed physician and surgeon, osteopathic physician and surgeon, osteopath, or qualified doctor of chiropractic, licensed physician assistant, or advanced registered nurse practitioner. A report shall be filed at the beginning of service and at three-year intervals.

Each doctor of chiropractic licensed as of July 1, 1974, shall affirm on each certificate of physical examination that the affidavit required by Iowa Code section 151.8 is on file with the Iowa board of chiropractic examiners.

12.4(15) Support staff. The board shall develop and implement procedures for the use of educational support staff to augment classroom instruction and to meet individual student needs. These staff members may be employed by the board or by the area education agency.

12.4(16) Volunteer. A volunteer shall be defined as an individual who, without compensation or remuneration, provides a supportive role and performs tasks under the direction, supervision, and control of the school or school district staff. A volunteer shall not work as a substitute for or replace the functions and duties of a teacher as established in subrule 12.4(8).

DIVISION V
EDUCATION PROGRAM

281—12.5(256) Education program. The following education program standards shall be met by schools and school districts for accreditation with the start of the 1989-1990 school year.

12.5(1) Prekindergarten program. If a school offers a prekindergarten program, the program shall be designed to help children to work and play with others, to express themselves, to learn to use and manage their bodies, and to extend their interests and understanding of the world about them. The prekindergarten program shall relate the role of the family to the child's developing sense of self and perception of others. Planning and carrying out prekindergarten activities designed to encourage cooperative efforts between home and school shall focus on community resources. A prekindergarten teacher shall hold a license/certificate licensing/certifying that the holder is qualified to teach in prekindergarten. A nonpublic school which offers only a prekindergarten may, but is not required to, seek and obtain accreditation.

12.5(2) Kindergarten program. The kindergarten program shall include experiences designed to develop healthy emotional and social habits and growth in the language arts and communication skills, as well as a capacity for the completion of individual tasks, and protect and increase physical well-being with attention given to experiences relating to the development of life skills and human growth and development. A kindergarten teacher shall be licensed/certificated to teach in kindergarten. An accredited nonpublic school must meet the requirements of this subrule only if the nonpublic school offers a kindergarten program.

12.5(3) Elementary program, grades 1-6. The following areas shall be taught in grades one through six: English-language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, health, human growth and development, physical education, traffic safety, music, and visual art.

In implementing the elementary program standards, the following general curriculum definitions shall be used.

a. English-language arts. English-language arts instruction shall include the following communication processes: speaking; listening; reading; writing; viewing; and visual expression and nonverbal communication. Instruction shall incorporate language learning and creative, logical, and critical thinking. The following shall be taught: oral and written composition; communication processes and skills, including handwriting and spelling; literature; creative dramatics; and reading.

b. Social studies. Social studies instruction shall include citizenship education, history, and social sciences. Democratic beliefs and values, problem-solving skills, and social and political participation skills shall be incorporated. Instruction shall encompass geography, history of the United States and Iowa, and cultures of other peoples and nations. American citizenship, including the study of national, state, and local government; and the awareness of the physical, social, emotional and mental self shall be infused in the instructional program.

c. Mathematics. Mathematics instruction shall include number sense and numeration; concepts and computational skills with whole numbers, fractions, mixed numbers and decimals; estimation and mental arithmetic; geometry; measurement; statistics and probability; and patterns and relationships. This content shall be taught through an emphasis on mathematical problem solving, reasoning, and applications; language and symbolism to communicate mathematical ideas; and connections among mathematical topics and between mathematics and other disciplines. Calculators and computers shall be used in concept development and problem solving.

d. Science. Science instruction shall include life, earth, and physical science and shall incorporate hands-on process skills; scientific knowledge; application of the skills and knowledge to students and society; conservation of natural resources; and environmental awareness.

e. Health. Health instruction shall include personal health; food and nutrition; environmental health; safety and survival skills; consumer health; family life; substance abuse and nonuse, encompassing the effects of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and poisons on the human body; human sexuality, self-esteem, stress management, and interpersonal relationships; emotional and social health; health resources; and prevention and control of disease, and the characteristics of communicable diseases, including acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

f. Physical education. Physical education instruction shall include movement experiences and body mechanics; fitness activities; rhythmic activities; stunts and tumbling; simple games and relays; sports skills and activities; and water safety.

g. Traffic safety. Traffic safety instruction shall include pedestrian safety; bicycle safety; auto passenger safety; school bus passenger safety; seat belt use; substance education; and the application of legal responsibility and risk management to these concepts.

h. Music. Music instruction shall include skills, knowledge, and attitudes and shall include singing and playing music; listening to and using music; reading and writing music; recognizing the value of the world's musical heritage; respecting individual musical aspirations and values; and preparing for consuming, performing, or composing.

i. Visual art. Visual art instruction shall include perceiving, comprehending, and evaluating the visual world; viewing and understanding the visual arts; developing and communicating imaginative and inventive ideas; and making art.

12.5(4) Junior high program, grades 7 and 8. The following shall be taught in grades 7 and 8: English-language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, health, human growth and development, physical education, music, visual art, family and consumer education, career education, and technology education. Instruction in the following areas shall include the contributions and perspectives of persons with disabilities, both men and women, and persons from diverse racial and ethnic groups, and shall be designed to eliminate career and employment stereotypes.

In implementing the junior high program standards, the following general curriculum definitions shall be used.

a. English-language arts. Same definition as in 12.5(3)“a” with the exclusion of handwriting.

b. Social studies. Social studies instruction shall include citizenship education, history and social sciences. Democratic beliefs and values, problem-solving skills, and social and political participation skills shall be incorporated. Instruction shall encompass history, economics, geography, government including American citizenship, behavioral sciences, and the cultures of other peoples and nations. Strategies for continued development of positive self-perceptions shall be infused.

c. Mathematics. Mathematics instruction shall include number and number relationships including ratio, proportion, and percent; number systems and number theory; estimation and computation; geometry; measurement; statistics and probability; and algebraic concepts of variables, patterns, and functions. This content shall be taught through an emphasis on mathematical problem solving, reasoning, and applications; language and symbolism to communicate mathematical ideas; and connections among mathematical topics and between mathematics and other disciplines. Calculators and computers shall be used in concept development and problem solving.

d. Science. Same definition as in 12.5(3)“d.”

e. Health. Health instruction shall include personal health; food and nutrition; environmental health; safety and survival skills; consumer health; family life; substance abuse and nonuse, encompassing the effects of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and poisons on the human body; human sexuality, self-esteem, stress management, and interpersonal relationships; emotional and social health; health resources; and prevention and control of disease and the characteristics of communicable diseases, including sexually transmitted diseases and acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

f. Physical education. Physical education shall include the physical fitness activities that increase cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, and flexibility; sports and games; tumbling and gymnastics; rhythms and dance; water safety; leisure and lifetime activities.

g. Music. Same definition as in 12.5(3)“h” with the addition of using music as an avocation or vocation.

h. Visual art. Same definition as in 12.5(3)“i” with the addition of using visual arts as an avocation or vocation.

i. Family and consumer education. Family and consumer education instruction shall include the development of positive self-concept, understanding personal growth and development and relationships with peers and family members in the home, school and community, including men, women, minorities and persons with disabilities. Subject matter emphasizes the home and family, including parenting, child development, textiles and clothing, consumer and resource management, foods and nutrition, housing, and family and individual health. This subrule shall not apply to nonpublic schools.

j. Career education. Career education instruction shall include exploration of employment opportunities, experiences in career decision making, and experiences to help students integrate work values and work skills into their lives. This subrule shall not apply to nonpublic schools. However, nonpublic schools shall comply with subrule 12.5(7).

k. Technology education. Technology education instruction shall include awareness of technology and its impact on society and the environment; furthering students' career development by contributing to their scientific principles, technical information and skills to solve problems related to an advanced technological society; and orienting students to technologies which impact occupations in all six of the required service areas. The purpose of this instruction is to help students become technologically literate and become equipped with the necessary skills to cope with, live in, work in, and contribute to a highly technological society. This subrule shall not apply to nonpublic schools.

12.5(5) High school program, grades 9-12. In grades 9 through 12 a unit is a course or equivalent related components or partial units taught throughout the academic year as defined in subrule 12.5(18). The following shall be offered and taught as the minimum program: English-language arts, six units; social studies, five units; mathematics, six units as specified in 12.5(5) "c"; science, five units; health, one unit; physical education, one unit; fine arts, three units; foreign language, four units; and vocational education, 12 units as specified in 12.5(5) "i."

In implementing the high school program standards, the following curriculum standards shall be used.

a. English-language arts (six units). English-language arts instruction shall include the following communication processes: speaking; listening; reading; writing; viewing; and visual expression and nonverbal communication. Instruction shall incorporate language learning and creative, logical, and critical thinking. The program shall encompass communication processes and skills; written composition; speech; debate; American, English, and world literature; creative dramatics; and journalism.

b. Social studies (five units). Social studies instruction shall include citizenship education, history, and the social sciences. Instruction shall encompass the history of the United States and the history and cultures of other peoples and nations including the analysis of persons, events, issues, and historical evidence reflecting time, change, and cause and effect. Instruction in United States government shall include an overview of American government through the study of the United States Constitution, the bill of rights, the federal system of government, and the structure and relationship between the national, state, county, and local governments; and voter education including instruction in statutes and procedures, voter registration requirements, the use of paper ballots and voting machines in the election process, and the method of acquiring and casting an absentee ballot. Students' knowledge of the Constitution and the bill of rights shall be assessed. Economics shall include comparative and consumer studies in relation to the market and command economic systems. Geography shall include the earth's physical and cultural features, their spatial arrangement and interrelationships, and the forces that affect them. Sociology, psychology, and anthropology shall include the scientific study of the individual and group behavior(s) reflecting the impact of these behaviors on persons, groups, society, and the major institutions in a society. Democratic beliefs and values, problem-solving skills, and social and political skills shall be incorporated. All students in grades nine through twelve must, as a condition of graduation, complete a minimum of one-half unit of United States government and one unit of United States history and receive instruction in the government of Iowa.

c. Mathematics (six units). Mathematics instruction shall include:

(1) Four sequential units which are preparatory to postsecondary educational programs. These units shall include strands in algebra, geometry, trigonometry, statistics, probability, and discrete mathematics. Mathematical concepts, operations, and applications shall be included for each of these strands. These strands shall be taught through an emphasis on mathematical problem solving, reasoning, and structure; language and symbolism to communicate mathematical ideas; and connections among mathematical topics and between mathematics and other disciplines. Calculators and computers shall be used in concept development and problem solving.

(2) Two additional units shall be taught. These additional units may include mathematical content as identified in, but not limited to, paragraphs 12.5(3)“c,” 12.5(4)“c,” and 12.5(5)“c”(1). These units are to accommodate the locally identified needs of the students in the school or school district. This content shall be taught through an emphasis on mathematical problem solving, reasoning, and structure; language and symbolism to communicate mathematical ideas; and connections among mathematical topics and between mathematics and other disciplines. Calculators and computers shall be used in concept development and problem solving.

d. Science (five units). Science instruction shall include biological, earth, and physical science, including physics and chemistry. Full units of chemistry and physics shall be taught but may be offered in alternate years. All science instruction shall incorporate hands-on process skills; scientific knowledge; the application of the skills and knowledge to students and society; conservation of natural resources; and environmental awareness.

e. Health (one unit). Health instruction shall include personal health; food and nutrition; environmental health; safety and survival skills; consumer health; family life; human growth and development; substance abuse and nonuse; emotional and social health; health resources; and prevention and control of disease, including sexually transmitted diseases and acquired immune deficiency syndrome, current crucial health issues, human sexuality, self-esteem, stress management, and interpersonal relationships.

f. Physical education (one unit). Physical education shall include the physical fitness activities that increase cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength and flexibility; sports and games; tumbling and gymnastics; rhythms and dance; water safety; leisure and lifetime activities.

All physically able students shall be required to participate in the program for a minimum of one-eighth unit during each semester they are enrolled except as otherwise provided in this paragraph. A twelfth-grade student may be excused from this requirement by the principal of the school in which the student is enrolled under one of the following circumstances:

(1) The student is enrolled in a cooperative, work-study, or other educational program authorized by the school which requires the student's absence from the school premises during the school day.

(2) The student is enrolled in academic courses not otherwise available.

(3) An organized and supervised athletic program which requires at least as much time of participation per week as one-eighth unit of physical education.

Students in grades nine through eleven may be excused from the physical education requirement in order to enroll in academic courses not otherwise available to the student if the board of directors of the school district in which the school is located, or the authorities in charge of the school, if the school is a nonpublic school, determine that students from the school may be permitted to be excused from the physical education requirement.

A student may be excused by the principal of the school in which the student is enrolled, in consultation with the student's counselor, for up to one semester, trimester, or the equivalent of a semester or trimester, per year if the parent or guardian of the student requests in writing that the student be excused from the physical education requirement. The student seeking to be excused from the physical education requirement must, at some time during the period for which the excuse is sought, be a participant in an organized and supervised athletic program which requires at least as much time of participation per week as one-eighth unit of physical education.

The student's parent or guardian must request the excuse in writing. The principal shall inform the superintendent that the student has been excused.

g. Fine arts (three units). Fine arts instruction shall include at least two of the following:

(1) Dance. Dance instruction shall encompass developing basic movement skills; elementary movement concepts; study of dance forms and dance heritage; participating in dance; and evaluating dance as a creative art; and using dance as an avocation or vocation.

(2) Music. Music instruction shall include skills, knowledge, and attitudes and the singing and playing of music; listening to and using music; reading and writing music; recognizing the value of the world's musical heritage; respecting individual musical aspirations and values; preparing for consuming, performing, or composing; and using music as an avocation or vocation.

(3) Theatre. Theatre instruction shall encompass developing the internal and external resources used in the theatre process; creating theatre through artistic collaboration; relating theatre to its social context; forming aesthetic judgments; and using theatre as an avocation or vocation.

(4) Visual art. Visual art instruction shall include developing concepts and values about natural and created environments; critiquing works of art; evaluating relationships between art and societies; analyzing, abstracting, and synthesizing visual forms to express ideas; making art; and using visual art as an avocation or vocation.

h. Foreign language (four units). The foreign language program shall be a four-unit sequence of uninterrupted study in at least one language. Foreign language instruction shall include listening comprehension appropriate to the level of instruction; rateable oral proficiency; reading comprehension appropriate to the level of instruction; writing proficiency appropriate to the level of instruction and cultural awareness.

All high schools shall offer and teach the first two units of the sequence. The third and fourth units must be offered. However, the department of education may, on an annual basis, waive the third and fourth unit requirements upon the request of the board. The board must document that a licensed/certificated teacher was employed and assigned a schedule that would have allowed students to enroll, that the class was properly scheduled, that students were aware of the course offerings, and that no students enrolled.

i. Vocational education—school districts (three units each in at least four of the six service areas). A minimum of three sequential units, of which only one may be a core unit, shall be taught in four of the following six service areas: agricultural education, business and office education, health occupations education, home economics education, industrial education, and marketing education. The instruction shall be competency-based; shall provide a base of knowledge which will prepare students for entry level employment, additional on-the-job training, and postsecondary education within their chosen field; shall be articulated with postsecondary programs of study, including apprenticeship programs; shall reinforce basic academic skills; shall include the contributions and perspectives of persons with disabilities, both men and women, and persons from diverse racial and ethnic groups. Vocational core courses may be used in more than one vocational service area. Multioccupations may be used to complete a sequence in more than one vocational service area; however, a core course(s) and multioccupations cannot be used in the same sequence. If a district elects to use multioccupations to meet the requirements in more than one service area, documentation must be provided to indicate that a sufficient variety of quality training stations be available to allow students to develop occupational competencies. A district may apply for a waiver if an innovative plan for meeting the instructional requirement for the standard is submitted to and approved by the director of the department of education.

The instructional programs also shall comply with the provisions of Iowa Code chapter 258 relating to vocational education. Advisory committee/councils designed to assist vocational education planning and evaluation shall be composed of public members with emphasis on persons representing business, agriculture, industry, and labor. The membership of local advisory committees/councils will fairly represent each gender and minority residing in the school district. The accreditation status of a school district failing to comply with the provisions of this subrule shall be governed by 281—subrule 46.7(10), paragraph “g.”

(1) A service area is the broad category of instruction in the following occupational cluster areas (definitions are those used in these rules):

(2) "Agricultural education programs" prepare individuals for employment in agriculture-related occupations. Such programs encompass the study of applied sciences and business management principles, as they relate to agriculture. Agricultural education focuses on, but is not limited to, study in horticulture, forestry, conservation, natural resources, agricultural products and processing, production of food and fiber, aquaculture and other agricultural products, mechanics, sales and service, economics marketing, and leadership development.

(3) "Business and office education programs" prepare individuals for employment in varied occupations involving such activities as planning, organizing, directing, and controlling all business office systems and procedures. Instruction offered includes such activities as preparing, transcribing, systematizing, preserving communications; analyzing financial records; receiving and disbursing money; gathering, processing and distributing information; and performing other business and office duties.

(4) "Health occupations education programs" prepare individuals for employment in a variety of occupations concerned with providing care in the areas of wellness, prevention of disease, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation. Instruction offered encompasses varied activities in such areas as dental science, medical science, diagnostic services, treatment therapy, patient care areas, rehabilitation services, record keeping, emergency care, and health education. Many occupations in this category require licensing or credentialing to practice, or to use a specific title.

(5) "Home economics education programs" encompass two categories of instructional programs:

1. "Consumer and family science" programs may be taught to prepare individuals for a multiple role of homemaker and wage earner and may include such content areas as food and nutrition; consumer education; family living and parenthood; child development and guidance; family and individual health; housing and home management; and clothing and textiles.

2. "Home economics occupations programs" prepare individuals for paid employment in such home economics-related occupations as child care aide/assistant, food production management and services, and homemaker/home health aide.

(6) "Industrial education programs" encompass two categories of instructional programs—industrial technology and trade and industrial. Industrial technology means an applied discipline designed to promote technological literacy which provides knowledge and understanding of the impact of technology including its organizations, techniques, tools, and skills to solve practical problems and extend human capabilities in areas such as construction, manufacturing, communication, transportation, power and energy. Trade and industrial programs prepare individuals for employment in such areas as protective services, construction trades, mechanics and repairers, precision production, transportation, and graphic communications. Instruction includes regular systematic classroom activities, followed by experiential learning with the most important processes, tools, machines, management ideas, and impacts of technology.

(7) "Marketing education programs" prepare individuals for marketing occupations, including merchandising and management—those activities which make products and services readily available to consumers and business. Instruction stresses the concept that marketing is the bridge between production (including the creation of services and ideas) and consumption. These activities are performed by retailers, wholesalers, and businesses providing services in for-profit and not-for-profit business firms.

(8) "Sequential unit" applies to an integrated offering, directly related to the educational and occupational skills preparation of individuals for jobs and preparation for postsecondary education. Sequential units provide a logical framework for the instruction offered in a related occupational area and do not require prerequisites for enrollment. A unit is defined in subrule 12.5(18).

(9) “Competency” is a learned student performance statement which can be accurately repeated and measured. Instruction is based on incumbent worker-validated statements of learner results (competencies) which clearly describe what skills the students will be able to demonstrate as a result of the instruction. Competencies function as the basis for building the instructional program to be offered. Teacher evaluation of students, based upon their ability to perform the competencies, is an integral part of a competency-based system.

(10) “Minimum competency lists” contain competencies validated by statewide technical committees, composed of representatives from appropriate businesses, industries, agriculture, and organized labor. These lists contain essential competencies which lead to entry level employment and are not intended to be the only competencies learned. Districts will choose one set of competencies per service area upon which to build their program or follow the process detailed in 281—subrule 46.7(2) to develop local competencies.

(11) “Clinical experience” involves direct instructor supervision in the actual workplace, so that the learner has the opportunity to apply theory and to perfect skills taught in the classroom and laboratory.

“Field training” is an applied learning experience in a nonclassroom environment under the supervision of an instructor.

“Lab training” is experimentation, practice or simulation by students under the supervision of an instructor.

“On-the-job training” is a cooperative work experience planned and supervised by a teacher-coordinator and the supervisor in the employment setting.

(12) “Coring” is an instructional design whereby competencies common to two or more different vocational service areas are taught as one course offering. Courses shall be no longer than one unit of instruction. Course(s) may be placed wherever appropriate within the program offered. This offering may be acceptable as a unit or partial unit in more than one vocational program to meet the standard.

(13) “Articulation” is the process of mutually agreeing upon competencies and performance levels transferable between institutions and programs for advanced placement or credit in a vocational program. An articulation agreement is the written document which explains the decisions agreed upon and the process used by the institution to grant advanced placement or credit.

(14) “Multioccupational courses” combine on-the-job training in any of the occupational areas with the related classroom instruction. The instructor provides the related classroom instruction and coordinates the training with the employer at the work site. A multioccupational course may only be used to complete a sequence in more than one vocational service area if competencies from the appropriate set of minimum competencies are a part of the related instruction.

j. *Vocational education/nonpublic schools (five units).* A nonpublic school which provides an educational program that includes grades 9 through 12 shall offer and teach five units of occupational education subjects, which may include, but are not limited to, programs, services, and activities which prepare students for employment in business or office occupations, trade and industrial occupations, consumer and family sciences or home economics occupations, agricultural occupations, marketing occupations, and health occupations. By July 1, 1993, instruction shall be competency-based, articulated with postsecondary programs of study, and may include field, laboratory, or on-the-job training.

12.5(6) *Physical education and health courses exemption.* A pupil shall not be required to enroll in either physical education or health courses if the pupil’s parent or guardian files a written statement with the school principal that the course conflicts with the pupil’s religious beliefs.

12.5(7) Career education. Each school or school district shall incorporate school-to-career educational programming into its comprehensive school improvement plan. Curricular and cocurricular teaching and learning experiences regarding career education shall be provided from the prekindergarten level through grade 12. Career education shall be incorporated into the total educational program and shall include, but is not limited to, awareness of self in relation to others and the needs of society; exploration of employment opportunities, at a minimum, within Iowa; experiences in personal decision making; experiences that help students connect work values into all aspects of their lives; and the development of employability skills. In the implementation of this subrule, the board shall comply with Iowa Code section 280.9.

12.5(8) Multicultural and gender fair approaches to the educational program. The board shall establish a policy to ensure that students are free from discriminatory practices in the educational program as required by Iowa Code section 256.11. In developing or revising the policy, parents, students, instructional and noninstructional staff, and community members shall be involved. Each school or school district shall incorporate multicultural and gender fair goals for the educational program into its comprehensive school improvement plan. Incorporation shall include the following:

a. Multicultural approaches to the educational program. These shall be defined as approaches which foster knowledge of, and respect and appreciation for, the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups, including race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, and socioeconomic background. The contributions and perspectives of Asian Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, American Indians, European Americans, and persons with disabilities shall be included in the program.

b. Gender fair approaches to the educational program. These shall be defined as approaches which foster knowledge of, and respect and appreciation for, the historical and contemporary contributions of women and men to society. The program shall reflect the wide variety of roles open to both women and men and shall provide equal opportunity to both sexes.

12.5(9) Special education. The board of each school district shall provide special education programs and services for its resident children which comply with rules of the state board of education implementing Iowa Code chapters 256, 256B, 273, and 280.

12.5(10) Technology integration. Each school or school district shall incorporate into its comprehensive school improvement plan demonstrated use of technology to meet its student learning goals. As described in Iowa Code section 295.3, progress with the use of technology shall be included in the school district's annual progress report.

12.5(11) Global education. Each school or school district shall incorporate global education into its comprehensive school improvement plan as required by Iowa Code section 256.11. Global education shall be incorporated into all areas and levels of the educational program so students have the opportunity to acquire a realistic perspective on world issues, problems, and the relationship between an individual's self-interest and the concerns of people elsewhere in the world.

12.5(12) Provisions for gifted and talented students. Each school district shall incorporate gifted and talented programming into its comprehensive school improvement plan as required by Iowa Code section 257.43. The comprehensive school improvement plan shall include the following gifted and talented program provisions: valid and systematic procedures, including multiple selection criteria for identifying gifted and talented students from the total student population; goals and performance measures; a qualitatively differentiated program to meet the students' cognitive and affective needs; staffing provisions; an in-service design; a budget; and qualifications of personnel administering the program. Each school district shall review and evaluate its gifted and talented programming. This subrule does not apply to accredited nonpublic schools.

12.5(13) Provisions for at-risk students. Each school district shall include in its comprehensive school improvement plan the following provisions for meeting the needs of at-risk students: valid and systematic procedures and criteria to identify at-risk students throughout the school district's school-age population, determination of appropriate ongoing educational strategies for alternative options education programs as required in Iowa Code section 280.19A, and review and evaluation of the effectiveness of provisions for at-risk students. This subrule does not apply to accredited nonpublic schools.

Each school district using additional allowable growth for provisions for at-risk students shall incorporate educational program goals for at-risk students into its comprehensive school improvement plan. Provisions for at-risk students shall align with the student learning goals and content standards established by the school district or by school districts participating in a consortium. The comprehensive school improvement plan shall also include objectives, activities, cooperative arrangements with other service agencies and service groups, and strategies for parental involvement to meet the needs of at-risk children. The incorporation of these requirements into a school district's comprehensive school improvement plan shall serve as the annual application for additional allowable growth designated in Iowa Code section 257.38.

12.5(14) Unit. A unit is a course which meets one of the following criteria: it is taught for at least 200 minutes per week for 36 weeks; it is taught for the equivalent of 120 hours of instruction; or it is an equated requirement as a part of an innovative program filed as prescribed in rule 12.9(256). A fractional unit shall be calculated in a manner consistent with this subrule. Multiple-section courses taught at the same time in a single classroom situation by one teacher do not meet this unit definition for the assignment of a unit of credit. However, the third and fourth years of a foreign language may be taught at the same time by one teacher in a single classroom situation each yielding a unit of credit.

12.5(15) Credit. A student shall receive a credit or a partial credit upon successful completion of a course which meets one of the criteria in subrule 12.5(14). The board may award credit on a performance basis through the administration of an examination, provided the examination covers the content ordinarily included in the regular course.

12.5(16) Subject offering. A subject shall be regarded as offered when the teacher of the subject has met the licensure and endorsement standards of the state board of educational examiners for that subject; instructional materials and facilities for that subject have been provided; and students have been informed, based on their aptitudes, interests, and abilities, about possible value of the subject.

A subject shall be regarded as taught only when students are instructed in it in accordance with all applicable requirements outlined herein. Subjects which the law requires schools and school districts to offer and teach shall be made available during the school day as defined in subrules 12.1(8) to 12.1(10).

12.5(17) Educational excellence program—Phase III. Educational excellence funds received by school districts shall support the school district's comprehensive school improvement plan according to the intent of the general assembly as described in Iowa Code section 294A.12. When Phase III funds are used to support the district's comprehensive school improvement plan, the school district shall submit the Phase III budget on forms supplied by the department.

12.5(18) Early intervention program. Each school district receiving early intervention program funds shall make provisions to meet the needs of kindergarten through grade 3 students. The intent of the early intervention program is to reduce class size, to achieve a higher level of student success in the basic skills, and to increase teacher-parent communication and accountability. Each school district shall develop a class size management strategy by September 15, 1999, to work toward, or to maintain, class sizes in basic skills instruction for kindergarten through grade 3 that are at the state goal of 17 students per teacher. Each school district shall incorporate into its comprehensive school improvement plan goals and activities for kindergarten through grade 3 students to achieve a higher level of success in the basic skills, especially reading. A school district shall, at a minimum, biannually inform parents of their individual child's performance on the results of diagnostic assessments in kindergarten through grade 3. If intervention is appropriate, the school district shall inform the parents of the actions the school district intends to take to improve the child's reading skills and provide the parents with strategies to enable the parents to improve their child's skills.

DIVISION VI
ACTIVITY PROGRAM

281—12.6(256) Activity program. The following standards shall apply to the activity program of accredited schools and school districts.

12.6(1) General guidelines. Each board shall sponsor a pupil activity program sufficiently broad and balanced to offer opportunities for all pupils to participate. The program shall be supervised by qualified professional staff and shall be designed to meet the needs and interests and challenge the abilities of all pupils consistent with their individual stages of development; contribute to the physical, mental, athletic, civic, social, moral, and emotional growth of all pupils; offer opportunities for both individual and group activities; be integrated with the instructional program; and provide balance so a limited number of activities will not be perpetuated at the expense of others.

12.6(2) Supervised intramural sports. If the board sponsors a voluntary program of supervised intramural sports for pupils in grades seven through twelve, qualified personnel and adequate facilities, equipment, and supplies shall be provided. Middle school grades below grade seven may also participate.

DIVISION VII
STAFF DEVELOPMENT

281—12.7(256) Staff development. The following standards shall apply to staff development for accredited schools and school districts.

12.7(1) Provisions for staff development. Each school or school district shall incorporate into its comprehensive school improvement plan provisions for the professional development of all staff. To meet the professional needs of all staff, staff development activities shall align with district goals; shall be based on student and staff information; shall prepare all employees to work effectively with diverse learners and to implement multicultural, gender fair approaches to the educational program; and shall emphasize the research-based practices to achieve increased student achievement, learning, and performance as stated in the comprehensive school improvement plan.

12.7(2) Budget for staff development. The board shall annually budget specified funds to implement the plan required in subrule 12.7(1).

DIVISION VIII
ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

281—12.8(256) Accountability for student achievement. Schools and school districts shall meet the following accountability requirements for increased student achievement. Area education agencies shall provide technical assistance as required by 281—12.7(273).

12.8(1) Comprehensive school improvement. The general accreditation standards are minimum, uniform requirements. However, the department encourages schools and school districts to go beyond the minimum with their work toward ongoing improvement. As a means to this end, local comprehensive school improvement plans shall be specific to a school or school district and designed, at a minimum, to increase the learning, achievement, and performance of all students.

As a part of ongoing improvement in its educational system, the board shall adopt a written comprehensive school improvement plan designed for continuous school, parental, and community involvement in the development and monitoring of a plan that is aligned with school or school district determined needs. The plan shall incorporate, to the extent possible, the consolidation of federal and state planning, goal setting, and reporting requirements. The plan shall contain, but is not limited to, the following components:

a. Community involvement.

(1) Local community. The school or school district shall involve the local community in decision-making processes as appropriate. The school or school district shall seek input from the local community about, but not limited to, the following elements at least once every five years:

1. Statement of philosophy, beliefs, mission, or vision;
2. Major educational needs; and
3. Student learning goals.

(2) School improvement advisory committee. To meet requirements of Iowa Code section 280.12(2), the board shall appoint and charge a school improvement advisory committee to make recommendations to the board. Based on the committee members' analysis of the needs assessment data, they shall make recommendations to the board about the following components:

1. Major educational needs;
2. Student learning goals; and
3. Long-range goals that include, but are not limited to, the state indicators that address reading, mathematics, and science achievement.

(3) At least annually, the school improvement advisory committee shall also make recommendations to the board with regard to, but not limited to, the following:

1. Progress achieved with the annual improvement goals for the state indicators that address reading, mathematics, and science in subrule 12.8(3);
2. Progress achieved with other locally determined core indicators; and
3. Annual improvement goals for the state indicators that address reading, mathematics, and science achievement.

b. Data collection, analysis, and goal setting.

(1) Policy. The board shall adopt a policy for conducting ongoing and long-range needs assessment processes. This policy shall ensure involvement of and communication with the local community regarding its expectations for adequate preparation for all students as responsible citizens and successful wage earners. The policy shall include provisions for keeping the local community regularly informed of progress on state indicators as described in subrule 12.8(3), other locally determined indicators within the comprehensive school improvement plan as required by Iowa Code section 280.12, and the methods a school district will use to inform kindergarten through grade 3 parents of their individual child's performance biannually as described in 1999 Iowa Acts, House File 743. The policy shall describe how the school or school district shall provide opportunities for local community feedback on an ongoing basis.

(2) Long-range data collection and analysis. The long-range needs assessment process shall include provisions for collecting, analyzing, and reporting information derived from local, state, and national sources. The process shall include provisions for reviewing information acquired over time on the following:

1. State indicators and other locally determined indicators;
2. Locally established student learning goals; and
3. Specific data collection required by federal and state programs.

Schools and school districts shall also collect information about additional factors influencing student achievement which may include, but are not limited to, demographics, attitudes, health, and other risk factors.

(3) Long-range goals. The board, with input from its school improvement advisory committee, shall adopt long-range goals to improve student achievement in at least the areas of reading, mathematics, and science.

(4) Annual data collection and analysis. The ongoing needs assessment process shall include provisions for collecting and analyzing annual assessment data on the state indicators, other locally determined indicators, and locally established student learning goals.

(5) Annual improvement goals. The board, with input from its school improvement advisory committee, shall adopt annual improvement goals based on data from at least one districtwide assessment. The goals shall describe desired annual increase in the curriculum areas of, but not limited to, mathematics, reading, and science achievement for all students, for particular subgroups of students, or both. Annual improvement goals may be set for the early intervention program as described in subrule 12.5(18), other state indicators, locally determined indicators, locally established student learning goals, other curriculum areas, future student employability, or factors influencing student achievement.

c. Content standards and benchmarks.

(1) Policy. The board shall adopt a policy outlining its procedures for developing, implementing, and evaluating its total curriculum. The policy shall describe a process for establishing content standards, benchmarks, performance levels, and annual improvement goals aligned with needs assessment information.

(2) Content standards and benchmarks. The board shall adopt clear, rigorous, and challenging content standards and benchmarks in reading, mathematics, and science to guide the learning of students from the date of school entrance until high school graduation. Standards and benchmarks may be adopted for other curriculum areas defined in 281—Chapter 12, Division V. The comprehensive school improvement plan submitted to the department shall contain, at a minimum, content standards for reading, mathematics, and science. The educational program as defined in 281—Chapter 12, Division II, shall incorporate career education, multicultural and gender fair education, technology integration, global education, higher-order thinking skills, learning skills, and communication skills as outlined in subrules 12.5(7), 12.5(8), 12.5(10), and 12.5(11), and subparagraph 12.8(1)“c”(1).

d. Determination and implementation of actions to meet the needs. The comprehensive school improvement plan shall include actions the school or school district shall take districtwide in order to accomplish its long-range and annual improvement goals as required in Iowa Code section 280.12(1)“b.”

(1) Actions shall include, but are not limited to, addressing the improvement of curricular and instructional practices to attain the long-range goals, annual improvement goals, and the early intervention goals as described in subrule 12.5(18).

(2) A school or school district shall document consolidation of state and federal resources and requirements, as appropriate, to implement the actions in its comprehensive school improvement plan. State and federal resources shall be used, as applicable, to support implementation of the plan.

(3) A school or school district may have building-level action plans, aligned with its comprehensive school improvement plan. These may be included in the comprehensive school improvement plan or kept on file at the local level.

e. Evaluation of the comprehensive school improvement plan. A school or school district shall develop strategies to collect data and information to determine if the plan has accomplished the goals for which it was established.

f. Assessment of student progress. Each school or school district shall include in its comprehensive school improvement plan provisions for districtwide assessment of student progress for all students. The plan shall identify valid and reliable student assessments aligned with local content standards. These assessments are not limited to commercially developed measures. School districts receiving early intervention funding described in subrule 12.5(18) shall provide for diagnostic reading assessments for kindergarten through grade 3 students as described in 1999 Iowa Acts, House File 743.

(1) State indicators. Using at least one districtwide assessment, a school or school district shall assess student progress on the state indicators in, but not limited to, reading, mathematics, and science as specified in subrule 12.8(3). At least one districtwide assessment shall allow for, but not be limited to, the comparison of the school or school district's students with students from across the state and in the nation in reading, mathematics, and science. A school or school district shall use additional assessments to measure progress on locally determined content standards in at least reading, mathematics, and science.

(2) Performance levels. A school or school district shall establish at least three performance levels on at least one districtwide valid and reliable assessment in the areas of reading and mathematics for at least grades 4, 8, and 11 and science in grades 8 and 11 or use the achievement levels as established by the Iowa Testing Program to meet the intent of this subparagraph (2).

g. *Assurances and support.* A school or school district shall provide evidence that its board has approved and supports the five-year comprehensive school improvement plan and any future revisions of that plan. This assurance includes the commitment for ongoing improvement of the educational system.

12.8(2) *Submission of a comprehensive school improvement plan.* A school or school district shall submit to the department and respective area education agency a multiyear comprehensive school improvement plan on or before September 15, 2000. Beginning July 1, 2001, a school or school district shall submit a revised five-year comprehensive school improvement plan by September 15 of the school year following the comprehensive site visit specified in Iowa Code section 256.11 which incorporates, when appropriate, areas of improvement noted by the school improvement visitation team as described in subrule 12.8(4). A school or school district may, at any time, file a revised comprehensive school improvement plan with the department and respective area education agency.

12.8(3) *Annual reporting requirements.* A school or school district shall, at minimum, report annually to its local community about the progress on the state indicators and other locally determined indicators.

a. *State indicators.* A school or school district shall collect data on the following indicators for reporting purposes:

(1) The percentage of all fourth, eighth, and eleventh grade students achieving proficient or higher reading status using at least three achievement levels and by gender, race, socioeconomic status, students with disabilities, and other subgroups as required by state or federal law.

(2) The percentage of all fourth, eighth, and eleventh grade students achieving proficient or higher mathematics status using at least three achievement levels and for gender, race, socioeconomic status, students with disabilities, and other subgroups as required by state or federal law.

(3) The percentage of all eighth and eleventh grade students achieving proficient or higher science status using at least three achievement levels.

(4) The percentage of students considered as dropouts for grades 7 to 12 by gender, race, students with disabilities, and other subgroups as required by state or federal law.

(5) The percentage of high school seniors who intend to pursue postsecondary education/training.

(6) The percentage of high school students achieving a score or status on a measure indicating probable postsecondary success. This measure should be the measure used by the majority of students in the school, school district, or attendance center who plan to attend a postsecondary institution.

(7) The percentage of high school graduates who complete a core program of four years of English-language arts and three or more years each of mathematics, science, and social studies.

b. *Annual progress report.* Each school or school district shall submit an annual progress report to its local community, its respective area education agency, and the department. That report shall be submitted to the department by September 15, 2000, and by September 15 every year thereafter. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the following information:

(1) Baseline data on at least one districtwide assessment for the state indicators described in subrule 12.8(3). Every year thereafter the school or school district shall compare the annual data collected with the baseline data. A school or school district is not required to report to the community about subgroup assessment results when a subgroup contains fewer than ten students at a grade level. A school or school district shall report districtwide assessment results for all enrolled and tuitioned-in students.

(2) Locally determined performance levels for at least one districtwide assessment in, at a minimum, the areas of reading, mathematics, and science. Student achievement levels as defined by the Iowa Testing Program may be used to fulfill this requirement.

(3) Long-range goals to improve student achievement in the areas of, but not limited to, reading, mathematics, and science.

(4) Annual improvement goals based on at least one districtwide assessment in, at a minimum, the areas of reading, mathematics, and science. One annual improvement goal may address all areas, or individual annual improvement goals for each area may be identified. When a school or school district does not meet its annual improvement goals for one year, it shall include in its annual progress report the actions it will take to meet annual improvement goals for the next school year.

(5) Data on multiple assessments for reporting achievement for all students in the areas of reading and mathematics by September 15, 2001, and for science by September 15, 2003.

(6) Results by individual attendance centers, as appropriate, on the state indicators as stated in subrule 12.8(3) and any other locally determined factors or indicators. An attendance center, for reporting purposes, is a building that houses students in grade 4 or grade 8 or grade 11.

(7) Progress with the use of technology as required by Iowa Code section 295.3. This requirement does not apply to accredited nonpublic schools.

(8) School districts are encouraged to provide information on the reading proficiency of kindergarten through grade 3 students by grade level. However, all school districts receiving early intervention block grant funds shall report to the department the progress toward achieving their early intervention goals.

(9) Other reports of progress as the director of the department requires and other reporting requirements as the result of federal and state program consolidation.

12.8(4) *Comprehensive school improvement and the accreditation process.* All schools and school districts having accreditation on August 18, 1999, are presumed accredited unless or until the state board takes formal action to remove accreditation. The department shall use a Phase I and a Phase II process for the continued accreditation of schools and school districts as defined in Iowa Code section 256.11(10).

a. Phase I. The Phase I process includes ongoing monitoring by the department of each school and school district to determine if it is meeting the goals of its comprehensive school improvement plan and meeting the accreditation standards. Phase I contains the following two components:

(1) Annual comprehensive desk audit. This audit consists of a review by the department of a school or school district's annual progress report. The department shall review the report as required by subrule 12.8(3) and provide feedback regarding the report. The audit shall also include a review by the department of other annual documentation submitted by a school or school district as required for compliance with the educational standards in Iowa Code section 256.11 and other reports required by the director.

When the department determines a school or school district has areas of noncompliance, the department shall consult with the school or school district to determine what appropriate actions shall be taken by the school or school district. The department shall facilitate technical assistance when requested. When the department determines that a school or school district has not met compliance with one or more accreditation standards within a reasonable amount of time, the school or school district shall submit an action plan that is approved by the department. The action plan shall contain reasonable timelines for coming into compliance. If the department determines that the school or school district is not taking the necessary actions, the director of the department may place the school or school district in a Phase II accreditation process.

If a school or school district does not meet its stated annual improvement goals for at least two consecutive years in the areas of mathematics and reading and is not taking corrective steps, the department shall consult with the school or school district and determine whether a self-study shall be required. The department shall facilitate technical assistance when needed. The self-study shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. A review of the comprehensive school improvement plan.
2. A review of each attendance center's student achievement data.
3. Identification of factors that influenced the lack of goal attainment.
4. Submission of new annual improvement goals, if necessary.
5. Submission, if necessary, of a revised comprehensive school improvement plan.

Upon completion of a department-required self-study, the department shall collaborate with the school or school district to determine whether one or more attendance centers are to be identified as in need of improvement. For those attendance centers identified as being in need of improvement, the department shall facilitate technical assistance.

When a school or school district has completed a required self-study and has not met its annual improvement goals for at least two or more consecutive years, the department may conduct a site visit. When a site visit occurs, the department shall determine if appropriate actions were taken. If the site visit findings indicate that appropriate actions were taken, accreditation status shall remain.

(2) Comprehensive site visit. A comprehensive site visit shall occur at least once every five years as required by Iowa Code section 256.11(10) or before, if requested by the school or school district. The purpose of a comprehensive site visit is to assess progress with the comprehensive school improvement plan, to provide a general assessment of educational practices, to make recommendations with regard to the visit findings for the purposes of improving educational practices above the level of minimum compliance, and to determine that a school or school district is in compliance with the accreditation standards. The department and the school district or school may coordinate the accreditation with activities of other accreditation associations. The comprehensive site visit shall include the following components:

1. School improvement site visit team. The department shall determine the size and composition of the school improvement site visit team. The team shall include members of the department staff and may include other members such as, but not limited to, area education agency staff, postsecondary staff, and other school district or school staff.

2. Previsit actions. The school improvement team shall review the five-year comprehensive school improvement plan, annual progress reports, and any other information requested by the department.

3. The site visit report. Upon review of documentation and site visit findings, the department shall provide a written report to the school or school district based on the comprehensive school improvement plan and other general accreditation standards. The report shall state areas of strength, areas in need of improvement, and areas, if any, of noncompliance. For areas of noncompliance, the school or school district shall submit, within a reasonable time frame, an action plan to the department. The department shall determine if the school or school district is implementing the necessary actions to address areas of noncompliance. If the department determines that the school or school district is not taking the necessary actions, the director of the department may place the school or school district in a Phase II accreditation process.

b. Conditions under which a Phase II visit may occur. A Phase II accreditation process shall occur if one or more of the following conditions exist:

(1) When either the annual monitoring or the comprehensive site visit indicates that a school or school district is deficient and fails to be in compliance with accreditation standards;

(2) In response to a petition filed with the director of the department requesting such a committee visitation that is signed by 20 percent or more of the registered voters of a school district;

(3) In response to a petition filed with the director of the department requesting such a committee visitation that is signed by 20 percent or more of the families having enrolled students in a school or school district; or

(4) At the direction of the state board of education.

c. The Phase II process. The Phase II process shall consist of monitoring by the department. This monitoring shall include the appointment of an accreditation committee to complete a comprehensive review of the school or school district documentation on file with the department. The accreditation committee shall complete one or more site visits. The Phase II process shall include the following components:

(1) Accreditation committee. The director of the department shall determine accreditation committee membership. The chairperson and majority of the committee shall be department staff. The committee may also include at least one representative from another school or school district, AEA staff, postsecondary education staff, board members, or community members. No member of an accreditation committee shall have a direct interest, as determined by the department, in the school or school district involved in the Phase II process. The accreditation committee shall have access to all documentation obtained from the Phase I process.

(2) Site visit. The accreditation committee shall conduct one or more site visits to determine progress made on noncompliance issues.

(3) Accreditation committee actions. The accreditation committee shall make a recommendation to the director of the department regarding accreditation status of the school or school district. This recommendation shall be contained in a report to the school or school district that includes areas of strength, areas in need of improvement, and, if any, the areas still not in compliance. The committee shall provide advice on available resources and technical assistance for meeting the accreditation standards. The school or school district may respond in writing to the director if it does not agree with the findings in the Phase II accreditation committee report.

(4) State board of education actions. The director of the department shall provide a report and a recommendation to the state board as a result of the Phase II accreditation committee visit and findings. The state board shall determine accreditation status. When the state board determines that a school or school district shall not remain accredited, the director of the department shall collaborate with the school or school district board to establish an action plan that includes deadlines by which areas of noncompliance shall be corrected. The action plan is subject to approval by the state board.

(5) Accreditation status. During the period of time the school or school district is implementing the action plan approved by the state board, the school or school district shall remain accredited. The accreditation committee may revisit the school or school district and determine whether the areas of noncompliance have been corrected. The accreditation committee shall report and recommend one of the following actions:

1. The school or school district shall remain accredited.
2. The school or school district shall remain accredited under certain specified conditions.
3. The school or school district shall have its accreditation removed as outlined in Iowa Code section 256.11(12).

The state board shall review the report and recommendation, may request additional information, and shall determine the accreditation status and further actions required by the school or school district as outlined in Iowa Code section 256.11(12).

DIVISION IX EXEMPTION REQUEST PROCESS

281—12.9(256) General accreditation standards exemption request. A school or school district may seek department approval for an exemption as stated in Iowa Code sections 256.9(48) and 256.11(8). The school or school district shall submit the exemption request to the director of the department with, at a minimum, the following: (1) the written request and (2) the standard exemption plan as described in subrule 12.9(1). For the 1999-2000 school year, the written request and plan shall be submitted before October 1, 1999. For subsequent school years, the written request and plan shall be submitted on or before January 1 preceding the beginning of the school year for which the exemption is sought. The exemption request may be approved for a time period not to exceed five years. The department may approve, on request of the school or school district, an extension of the exemption beyond the initial five-year period. The department shall notify the school or school district of the approval or denial of its exemption request not later than March 1 of the school year in which the request was submitted.

12.9(1) General accreditation standards exemption plan. The plan shall contain, but is not limited to, the following components:

- a.* The standard or standards for which the exemption is requested.
- b.* A rationale for each general accreditation standard identified in paragraph “a.” The rationale shall describe how the approval of the request will assist the school or school district to improve student achievement or performance as described in its comprehensive school improvement plan.
- c.* The sources of supportive research evidence and information, when appropriate, that were analyzed and used to form the basis of each submitted rationale.
- d.* How the school or school district staff collaborated with the local community or with the school improvement advisory committee about the need for the exemption request.
- e.* Evidence that the board approved the exemption request.
- f.* A list of the indicators that will be measured to determine success.
- g.* How the school or school district will measure the success of the standards exemption plan on improving student achievement or performance.

In its annual progress report as described in paragraph 12.8(3) “b,” the school or school district that receives an exemption approval shall include data to support increased student learning, achievement, or performance that has resulted from the approved standards exemption.

12.9(2) General accreditation standards exemption request and exemption plan review criteria.

The department shall use the information provided in the written request and exemption plan as described in subrule 12.9(1) to determine approval or denial of requests for exemptions from the general accreditation standards. The department will use the following criteria for approval or denial of an exemption plan:

a. Components “a” through “g” listed in subrule 12.9(1) are addressed.

b. Clarity, thoroughness, and reasonableness are evident, as determined by the department, for each component of the accreditation standards exemption plan.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 256.11, 280.23, and 256.7(21).

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